JPRS 78581

23 July 1981

Near East/North Africa Report

No. 2370

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STOCKHOLM TRIBUNAL ACCUSES SOVIETS OF GENOCIDE

Brussels SPECIAL L'EVENTAIL in French No. 76, 12-19 Jun 81 pp 27-28

[Article by A.D.: "Afghanistan--Methodical Genocide"]

[Text] In the tradition of the "Russell" or "Sakharov Tribunals," a new international tribunal has just been held in Stockholm to judge the acts committed by the Soviet troops who have been in Afghanistan for 2 years.

Among the "judges" who heard accusations of genocide we may mention the presence of the Portuguese Minister of Foreign Affairs Melo Antunes, the Mexican Archbishop Sergio Mendez Arced, the Algerian international-law judge Majid Benshikh, the Uruguayan writer Eduardo Galeano, and the Nobel Prize winner for biology, the American George Wald.

Toys That Kill

The maddest revelations were made during this session. Thus, "the Afghan soldiers who refuse to torture, shoot or bomb their compatriots are executed," refugees testified in Stockholm. Be that as it may, the sufferings of the Afghans go back to a period before the invasion as such. Already in 1978, "Soviet advisers were exerting influence there in all spheres of society, at the time that they had installed Mohammed Taraki as president of the country and had infused massive military aid.

Among the witnesses present at the "Stockholm Tribunal," Rahin Henar presented himself as a small merchant not involved in politics. This did not keep him from being arrested in January 1979 and being interrogated and tortured in the presence of a Soviet "adviser." He stated that he had suffered electric shocks in the hands and feet. His torturers had the idea of using two telephones to do this. "They tortured me for 4 nights," declares Henar, "in one of the offices of the Ministry of Interior. I finally fell into a coma after having declared invariably that I did not know any politicians.

"Next I was transferred to a prison where the cell was so small that I could not even lie down. Then I was transferred to another prison where I was whipped every night. And every day I saw 40 to 50 persons led off to execution. A soldier even told me later that the firing squad did not always have time to shoot everyone. The living 'condemned' were then buried by tractors and bulldozers, and sometimes one saw the earth move for half an hour after the 'operation'."

Henar told the Stockholm Tribunal that he came under a general amnesty when President Karmal came to power in December 1979, which enabled him to join the Mujahedin, a resistance organization.

Another witness, a rebel commander, revealed that while the Soviet soldiers executed the rebels captured, they were even more cruel toward civilians suspected of aiding the resistance. "They tie them to tanks and take them through the villages," declared Mohammed Gafour Yossefzai.

"They starve us, burn our harvests and kill our livestock. They kill the children with bombs that look like toys. This shows that they want to occupy our country and not provide it with a political solution."

The Wounded Are Buried

Testimony follows testimony, the next more sordid than the last. According to some of it, 30,000 to 40,000 civilians were killed last March at the time of a popular uprising in Herat, in the western part of Afghanistan. This is asserted by a member of the resistance, Rabhar Abdul Zayoum, who also discloses the massacre of 1,060 persons in the village of Kerala in the province of Konarha, along the Pakistan border. A totally absurd reason is given for this. The villagers are said to have refused to participate in a march in support of the government, which led the Soviets to carry out a savage genocide, even going so far as to bury the wounded alive.

In the light of this testimony, the task of the "Stockholm Tribunal" as regards determination of the exact extent of the Soviet interference in Afghanistan and evaluation of the violation of international law and protection of civilian populations in wartime is certainly not an easy one. For this tribunal, whose president is the Belgian professor of international law, Francois Rigaux, it is a difficult verdict to pronounce.

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HIGH DAM HISTORY, LEGACY OF PROBLEMS REVIEWED IN DETAIL

Cairo AL-AHRAM AL-IQTISADI in Arabic 22 Jun 81 pp 18-30

/Article: "The Egypt of the High Dam"/

/Text/ The file on the High Dam:

How much has been said about the High Dam!

How many points of view there are on it!

Before the High Dam was built, the talk that revolved about it took one general line, whether that concerned the job and the achievement or the slogans and songs.

But some time after the dam was built, a second point of view emerged.

The gist of this was the High Dam's side effects.

Experts talked about it and national councils specializing in objective, thorough study applied themselves to it.

Nonetheless, the subject is still hanging.

Who will resolve it, and how?

A few weeks ago Prof Muhammad Sadiq Sahhur sent AL-IQTISADI a study -- in fact one could call it an appeal for assistance -- which he, in his capacity as head of the Egyptian Academy of Scientific Culture had received from Dr 'Ali Fathi, who is truly one of the most well-versed, experienced engineers in Egypt in the field of dams. When we read the contents of what Dr 'Ali Fathi had written, we found that it was extremely serious -- so serious that the matter demanded that we open the file on the High Dam, starting with this study. Opening the file would be the opening move in a scientific dialogue to which we would invite all parties concerned, both those who are in agreement with Dr 'Ali Fathi's pessimistic observations and those who differ with them. In the end we seek the truth on behalf of Egypt. The truth in this issue is not the monopoly of our generation -- it is the property of all the generations to come.

/Signed/ AL-IQTISADI

One: A Letter to the President of the Egyptian Academy of Scientific Culture

Sincere greetings, and the following:

I am honored to inform you that in the light of my long-standing expertise on the Nile River and the problems which began to appear in Egypt following the construction of the High Dam, I have begun to consider that this dam has had a number of side effects which are of the utmost gravity and that the situtation calls for performance of a serious scientific study on these effects which will take all the situations and problems that now exist or are anticipated in the future into account so that it will be feasible to adopt measures suitable to protect the country from the dangers to which it has been exposed at the appropriate time.

Creating a great lake along the main course of the Nile and cutting Egypt off from the Nile's flood by means of the dam was an event on the order of the major geological occurrences to which the Nile Valley was exposed in ancient times. Grave developments must inevitably arise from such an event occurring under natural conditions which had reached a state of stability in Egypt a long time ago under the flood system. These developments will continue for many long years until the country attains a new state of stability. Therefore, what has happened so far should not be considered anything alongside what is expected to happen in the future.

We are now drinking poisoned water. Although the poison content is trivial now, it is constantly increasing. Our livestock resources are threatened with extinction from poisoning as well. We face the threat of having our homes collapse on our heads now that these homes have started floating on a sea of groundwater. Our agricultural output is constantly dropping in quantity and quality. The bed of the Nile in Egypt along with the installations on it face destruction on a vast scale. While we seek ways to increase our water intake, weeds in the watercourse, including the Nile itself, have been absorbing a large percentage of this intake.

The policy the specialized government agencies have been taking to cope with these dangers are founded on the following premises:

1. The High Dam has become an actual fact which cannot be changed.

2. The High Dam is to be considered one of the greatest achievements of the July revolution, and it must be preserved at all cost.

3. It is easy to eliminate any problem which has resulted from the High Dam totally without touching on the dam itself, by seeking the aid of modern technology.

4. The Water Research Institute established in the Ministry of Irrigation has the capacity to conduct all the research necessary in this regard, and there is no need to establish an independent agency to this end.

However, there is another view, which holds that if matters related to the dam keep proceeding in their current fashion, that will inevitably result in the destruction of Egypt. It replies to the points on which the government builds its policy with the following:

1. The statement that the dam has become an actual fact that cannot be changed is an empty excuse. The only fact in this world that cannot be changed is death.

2. Whether the High Dam was built for the sake of Egypt and the July revolution, or was built for the sake of Egypt, it is not reasonable that the price we pay to preserve it and the good name of the July revolution should be the life of Egypt itself.

3. Modern technology, no matter what progress it may have attained, cannot create permanent solutions to problems which have arisen following the construction of the dam without touching the source of the problems. It is just a delusion to believe the opposite. The issue of the dam is one of life or death issue as far as Egypt goes, and it must be dealt with in a sound scientific manner which will provide us with the greatest guarantee that can be obtained on the soundness of the measures taken on it.

4. The Water Research Institute which the Minsitry of Irrigation established will never succeed in carrying out the mission assigned to it in the context of the restrictions that have been imposed on it. What must be established is a higher scientific authority independent of the government apparatus and prepared to hear everything that is said and read, everything that is written, on the subject, to discuss, investigate and probe deeply with absolute freedom, then to issue its decision at the end without being influenced by any political considerations or other non-objective factors.

What must be noted in this regard is the fact that the issue of the High Dam is the issue of destiny as far as Egypt goes. Depriving Egyptians of the opportunity to discuss it in the presence of an authority which is independent of the government apparatus means depriving them of the right to determine their destiny.

What must be noted is that defending Egypt's security and safety is the sacred obligation of every qualified Egyptian. The issue which we are concerned with is a scientific one, and scientists alone are responsible for the soundness of the measures taken on it. They must determine whether it is necessary or unnecessary to establish the scientific authority mentioned above in order to enable everyone who conducts research on the issue of the side effects of the dam to present his research on these effects. What is recommended is that the Egyptian Academy of Scientific Culture conduct an opinion poll among scientists on this subject and present its conclusions to the president. In my opinion, the president will welcome this step, for it is he who said in the talk he gave to Egypt's scientists at the Second Conference on the Egypt of 2000:

"Brothers and sisters, in this conference of yours, you are being asked to help face the great challenges which Egypt will be meeting between now and 2000. This requires the performance of serious scientific study which will deal with all aspects and take all problems and circumstances existing now and anticipated in the future into account."

I do not think that Egypt is facing any challenge now that is greater than the problems which beset it following the construction of the High Dam. These have been

borne so far thanks to the enormous flood of loans and aid the country has received from the outer world -- but these could be cut off from us at any moment.

/Signed/ Eng 'Ali Fathi

Former Professor in the Engineering /Faculty/, Alexandria Eng 'Ali Fathi

A former professor in the Faculty of Engineering, Alexandria.

Graduated from the Royal School of Engineering in 1915 and obtained the exceptional achievement award from Sultan Husayn (a gold watch).

Worked as an agricultural engineer, 1915-1917.

Was a teacher at the School of Engineering, 1917-1931, during which time he traveled on a training mission to England, when he obtained an honorary bachelor of arts degree from London University and made scientific tours of the Sudan, Iraq and India.

He was assigned to set forth new programs for the School of Arts and Industries in Bulaq and transfer it to a new location in al'Abbasiyah (now occupied by the Engineering Faculty of 'Ayn Shams), under the name of the School of Applied Engineering, where he remained as superintendent until 1936.

He was appointed deputy of the Department of Natural Studies, 1938-1942, and was its acting director during the absence of its English director during the war.

He established the Faculty of Engineering in Alexandria in 1942 and remained as its dean until he retired in 1953, when he worked as professor of irrigation design.

He was full time professor in the Faculty of Engineering in Alexandria from 1954 to 1980.

He obtained the State Badge of Merit in 1978.

He has a number of papers on works to control the Nile and a book on the High Dam and its effects which the Egyptian General Book Authority published in 1976.

Two: The Seven Errors of the High Dam

The High Dam was built to perform the task of storing Nile water over the long term. This type of storage is of great help in improving Egypt's water intake; in addition to that, he dam offers Egypt full protection from peak floods and affords it an immense source of hyroelectric power.

However, nature has its eternal rules and regulations, and these are not easily subjected to outside intervention. Therefore the attempts mankind makes to solve the problems of nature facing it generally result in the creation of other problems. This is what happened with the High Dam project.

After construction of the High Dam was completed and it began to store water, something tantamount to the occurrence of a comprehensive revolution in natural conditions, which had reached a state of stability there a long time before, appeared in Egypt. It ought to have been realized that creating a great lake on the main Nile and cutting Egypt off from the Nile flood by constructing the dam was to be considered an event on the order of the major geological occurrences to which the Nile valley had been exposed in ancient times, and that such an event would perforce result in the occurrence of drastic changes in natural conditions in the Egyptian segment of the Nile Valley. However, enthusiasm over the benefits the dam was expected to realize for Egypt kept officials from thinking about the matter: People who talked of the possibility that the dam might have undesirable side effects were accused of doing so not for the safety of Egypt but for the sake of waging a fraudulent campaign to cast doubts about the dam in a spirit of resentment.

Now that the side effects of the dam have became actual fact, a point of view has arisen in Egypt which is very strange and contradictory as far as acknowledging, or failing to acknowledge, the dam's responsibility for what happened was concerned.

What is important, however, is that official departments turned their attention toward modern technology, considering it a life belt which would protect the country from drowning. From their conduct, it appears that the officials in these departments placed unlimited confidence in the ability of modern technology completely to eliminate all ills without touching on the roots of those ills. Were this true, it would be feasible for us to solve any problem that has arisen from the construction of the dam completely, without need to infringe upon the dam in any way.

I know that views concerning this point differ. My personal opinion is that there are natural laws which one cannot ignore that link cause and effect in all the natrual or industrial acts taking place in this world. No progress modern technology might attain will ever enable it to break these laws. All that one can expect from it is to discover the best means to enlist these laws themselves in the attainment of certain ends.

It might be feasible for technology to arrange superficial of temporary remedies to alleviate the drastic nature of some problems, but it cannot eliminate them completely without affecting their source. It is necessary to guard against an illusory feeling of confience in such cases. Often it is possible to remedy a source of danger temporarily because long-range consequences are hiddden from view. This applies to the action now being taken to cope with the problem of the deterioration of the agricultural soil, as will be stated.

The president previously requested university people, in his latest meeting with them, to contribute their resources to the efforts the government is making to solve the problems facing the country; one of his wise recommendations in this regard appeared in the statement he made to a scientific conference, when he said:

"Brothers and sisters, in this conference of yours, you are being asked to help face the great challenges which Egypt will be meeting between now and 2000.

This requires the performance of serious scientific study which will deal with all aspects and take all problems and circumstances existing now and anticipated in the future into account." There is no doubt that the side effects of the High Dam are the greatest challenge facing Egypt at the present time; to participate in facing this challenge is to be considered a sacred national duty which people in the universities must not shirk carrying out.

It is my hope that everyone will realize that the battle the High Dam has imposed on us is one of destiny, and I see no recourse but to point out that the spirit with which Egypt is waging this battle at the present time is the spirit of 5 June, whose nature was shortsightedness and contempt for problems. If we lost this battle, the result will not just be the loss of a limited portion of Egypt's land -- it will be the loss for all Egypt. This clearly indicates that we now need in the utmost to work with a new spirit, the spirit of 6 October, whose nature was farsightedness in making evaluations, precision in planning, and strength and speed in execution. Supporting my statement are the words which Dr 'Abd-al-Raziq Sidqi uttered in a discussion he held that was published in the newspaper AL-AHRAM under the title "The Land of Food Is in Danger." He said,

"Agricultural land is in trouble and is now in need of bold measures of a very urgent nature. Everyone realizes this and officials are concerned with the matter, but the situation will not admit of intellectual speculation, hesitant conduct or sluggish steps, for it is necessary to be decisive, resolute, firm and quick before it is too late. Everyone must cooperate with the government in thought and action, each from his own position."

Therefore, I, in my capacity as a person who has pursued the dam project from the day it came into being, am presenting this letter to people in the universities, beseeching them to discuss it and contribute the studies they may have carried out on this subject to the discussion so that it will ultimately be possible to dispose of the entire issue and present the president with material which he will be able to look upon as a response to the appeal he has already made to them.

The side effects of the dam which this letter deals with my be summaried as follows:

1. The continuous deterioration in the fertility of Egypt's agricultural land.

2. The comprehensive scouring of the Nile watercourse in Egypt.

3. The continuous regression of the northern Delta coastline.

4. Exposure of the inhabitants of the country to poisoning by deposits from chemical fertilizers and insecticides, large quantities of which are added to the land every year.

5. The risk that many buildings constructed on reinforced concrete foundations will collapse if a severe earthquake occurs in Egypt.

6. The spread of vegetation in waterways, including the Nile, and the loss of a large percentage of Egypt's water input for this reason.

7. The need for peasants constantly to flush out their farmland as there is no reasonable alternative to doing so.

In addition to these direct effects from the dam, the future entails the following dangers for Egypt:

First, the likelihood that Egypt will be exposed to comprehensive destruction if water flows from the dam reservoir without control.

Second, confrontation of a new transformation in all the environmental and natural conditions in Egypt after the dam completes the process of building a new delta behind itself, which it has already begun to do. Even though this will happen only after hundreds of years, there is no longer justification in terms of human conscience to omit it from calculations at the present time.

While there are people who consider that I am more pessimistic than necessary in my view of the situation, I ask them to note that excessive pessimism will in the worst of cases lead only to limited material losses in terms of the protective measures taken, while excessive optimism could be fatal.

In any event, the question is not one of optimism or pessimism but purely one of science which, if intentions are sincere, can easily be resolved in a manner admitting of no doubt or interpretation through intensified scientific research.

However, scientific research entails conditions which must be fulfilled if it is successfully to lead to its objective. The most important of these is that no nonobjective considerations dominate it, and this condition has not been met in all the research work the government departments are carrying out in this regard. This adds to the need for people in the universities to intervene in the matter; in their work they are supposed to be guided by science and sound thinking only.

Egypt before the High Dam

Egypt is an arid country where farming is almost entirely dependent on artificial irrigation from the Nile River. Farming is the main pillar of the national income in this country.

Egypt's land along the course of the Nile in Upper Egypt and its branches in the Delta consists of a stratum of clay overlying a deep formation of sand and gravel. The clay zone is several meters deep in the south, gradually increasing as one goes toward the Mediterranean until it attains an average of thickness of 11 meters in the Delta. Throughout its length, the floor of the riverbed penetrates to the lower sand stratum. In view of the relatively high permeability of this zone, the groundwater level in the upper clay zone is visibly affected by the water level in the river.

It is well known that plants, in order to grow, require soil, water and air. However, above all that, they require bacteria that live in the soil and are the link between the nonorganic elements that exist in the soil, water and air and the organic elements that exist in the soil, water and air and the organic compounds of which the plant is composed. One can say that the true peasant in charge of producing the plant is not the man working on the surface of the ground but the bacteria that live below it. The former is only the servant of the latter.

Under basin irrigation system, the land was inundated with water during the flood season, the surface water ran off after the river level dropped, then the land remained saturated with water. As soon as the ground emerged into view, winter plants would be sown and left to grow and bear fruit without need for artificial irrigation or drainage or the application of fertilizer.

As the Nile level kept dropping, the groundwater level dropped, and divine vision determined that the rate of decline would be such that the upper stratum of soil in which the roots of the plants were growing would continue to retain an adequate percentage of moisture through capillary action and along with some air that would permit the bacteria in the ground to peform their tasks as they must throughout the plants' period of maturation.

It is worth mentioning that neither the original agricultural soil nor the water of the Nile contained an elevate amount of the element nitrogen, which is one of the most essential elements for winter crops; the bacteria in the ground worked to fix nitrogen from the air not just the during the period of plant growth but also in the summer period when the land was not irrigated or farmed, in order to create a reserve which the following crop could use. This has been proved by analyses made in the past. This enabled the land to do without the application of fertilizer.

It is to be noted that the water saturation of the ground during the flood season followed by elimination of the water after the decline in the river level was tantamount to a periodic cleansing process which helped, first continuously to preserve the water permeability to the soil to an appropriate degree and second to prevent the accumulation of noxious salts in the soil.

The land preserved a fertility of the highest lvel for thousands of years under this system. When the shift from the system of basin irrigation to that of permanent irrigation occurred, bringing in such summer crops as cotton, conditions changed. Originally the ground had been irrigated in summer by automatic rises and falls during the flood season alone, the ground lost none of its fertility under that system, and there was no need for artificial drainage, although the ground was saturated with water percolating down from the Nile during the flood. This is proof that natural drainage through the lower sandy zone was sufficient, and the land needed fertilizer only to meet the requirements of the newly-introduced summer crops.

The area cultivated during the summer period did not include all the land. There was a crop cycle which enabled the land to benefit once every 3 years from the period of no irrigation.

A fuel shortage occurred during World War One and the necessary measures were taken to continue automatic irrigation throughout the year. Only at that point did the need for artificial drainage arise. As long as the groundwater level was at least 1.5 meters below the level of the ground on 1 July, no harm would occur to the soil because of the aid of natural drainage alone or natural and artificial drainage together. If there was adequate drainage present, there would be no grounds for doubting that the permanent irrigation system, with spontaneous irrigation throughout the year, could continue indefinitely without subjecting the agricultural soil to any deterioration.

There is no need to point out that any system imposed upon land for agricultural use must have a stable, lasting quality.

Egypt after the High Dam

Following construction of the High Dam, a new transformation occurred in natural conditions in Egypt. This transformation was deeper in its effects than the previous ones because it involved the termination of the flood cycle which had performed an annual soil cleansing operation and had replenished the surface and groundwater both. A fundamental change also took place in the nature of the Nile water drawn from the dam reservoir.

Analyses conducted on water at various depths in the dam reservoir Ministry of Health and National Research Center laboratories show that this water has experienced a deterioration in quality increasing with depth. The effects of this deterioration have become noticeable in Egypt, since the water drawn from the reservoir comes from great depths, not from the surface as is the case with rivers fed by natural lakes.

This phenomenon, actually requires intense study because it was not expected and it is not yet known whether it is one of the characteristics of very deep fresh-water reservoirs or is restricted to the reservoir of this dam and may be attributed to the fact that the valley in which the reservoir emerged was to some extent filled with crops.

One of the most important characteristics of the deterioration in water quality referred to above is the appearance of strange types of algae which have been found to weaken the capability of the sand filters used to purify the drinking water by several magnitudes. It is clear that water which percolates through sand filters with difficulty will percolate through clay agricultural soil with greater difficulty. This means that draining land by the downward percolation of water, as is supposed to occur, will be difficult and will increase in difficulty if the ground is irrigated with the same water year after year. This explains why the saturation rate in the top stratum of soil has increased, and it also explains the increase in groundwater salinity, because the ground is unable to be flushed out on the one hand and because the rate of irrigation water lost through evaporation is increased on the other. There is a clear tendency in official circles to ignore the existence of any relationship between the symptoms appearing on the ground and the deterioration appearing in the quality of Nile water in Egypt. In a meeting I had with a senior official in a government department regarding the reason for this, his answer was that the use of water for drinking is one thing and the use of water for irrigating farmland is something else!

Side Effects of the High Dam

The High Dam has had a number of side effects, some direct, some indirect, that is, occurring through other media. Here is an analytical review of the effects that have appeared so far:

1. The constant deterioration in the fertility of farmland.

When the High Dam project came into being, everyone expected that the need for artifical drainage of the farmland would disappear because the land would not be saturated with water during the flood season and the level of water in the Nile would remain constantly low -- in which case natural drainage in the underlying sand zone would be sufficient. However, the opposite happened. A few years after the storage process began behind the High Dam, symptoms of water saturation and increased salinity began to spread in like an epidemic fashion through the farmland in all areas of the country. One item of evidence for this was an item of news the newspaper Al-AHRAM published on 14 June 1972, stating:

"Dr al-Jabali, the minister of agriculture, has said that the ministerial committee to review the plan authorized 209 million pounds to carry out tile drainage projects throughout the republic."

Since then, evidence has accumulated to the effect that farmland in Egypt is faced with a process of constant deterioration. This prompted me to publish a letter in April 1978 titled "Don't Let Egypt's Land Die," in which I presented substantial proof of the gravity of the situation; however, this attempt on my part to stir up interest in the matter was in vain.

The deterioration in the fertility of the farmland may be attributed to two factors -- first, the fact that the land has been deprived of the annual cleaning process which it experienced at the time of the flood, and second, the change in the quality of Nile water in Egypt following construction of the dam, as previously mentioned. What one must fear is that if a radical change occurs in the nature of the soil, making the percolation water through either the clay or sand zone difficult, this will have to be subjected to careful scientific study. The situation has reached the point where ancient Egyptian temples in the Luxor area have started to suffer damage because of the rise in the groundwater level and the increased rate of salinity in the water, whereas, these temples had suffered no damage and lasted for thousands of years even though the land around them was inundated with water seven months a year during the flood season. Farmland in this area is now irrigated by pump -- that is, it cannot be said that excessive irrigation has taken place. Moreover, the lower sand stratum which is connected to the Nile bed is not far from the surface of the land and the Nile level is constantly low, which means the land enjoys all the appropriate circumstances for natural drainage. This state of affairs alone is enough to give notice that the situation is of the utmost gravity and that it must be faced by methods more serious than those being followed now.

The approach now being taken to remedy the symptoms that are appearing in the soil is to add agricultural lime to the soil; this is the traditional remedy which was applied in the past under circumstances wholly different from the present ones. This remedy has been discovered to realize some benefit, but it is temporary, and, if the source of the malady remains, it will perforce be repeated every few years and, through repetition, the composition of the soil will change and the remedy will lose its effectiveness with the passage of time. Here is

where the danger lies, because it will not be feasible subsequently to restore fertility to the land by any means, even if the floods return.

This clearly underlines the need to ensure that any plan drawn up to cope with any of the effects of the dam is based on the results it will lead to in the long range, and one must not just look at temporary results. Another approach toward coping with the symptoms appearing in the soil is most serious in import, since it bespeaks surrender to defeat in the current babble for agricultural development. The newspapers previously published a news item whose gist was that the per-feddan production of sugar cane in southern Upper Egypt had dropped in recent years from 50 to 15 tons and that the decline is continuing. The Ministry of Agriculture ought to have taken note of this decline before it reached this f ightening point and made preparations to remedy it in a radical manner, but what is being stated is that the ministry considered sending missions to America and India to look for new seeds. I think I have the right to ask what guarantee there is that changing seeds will restore to the land its former productivity, when the source of the deterioration is a deficiency in the soil itself.

Once again, the newspapers published an item whose gist was that the governor of al-Fayyum asked that cotton farming in the governorate be stopped, in accordance with peasants' complaints that their land had become unfit for cotton growing. The first deputy minister of agriculture was quoted as saying that the ministry would reduce the cotton acreage in all governorates of the country and would continue to reduce it until it came to 100,000 feddans, while it is now 1.2 million feddans. It was said that the plan the ministry drew up on this regard was to follow a crop composition in keeping with the nature of the condition the soil had attained. It is not difficult to realize that if the deep-rooted causes of the deterioration which has taken place in the fitness of the ground for cotton growing, or other crops, are not remedied and if the deterioration continues (which is almost certain), we will find ourselves compelled to change the crop composition every few years until all Egypt's land becomes unfit for farming any crop. I will not hide the fact that I felt great fear, indeed terror, when I heard that officials in the Ministry of Agriculture were thinking of such a method. It appears that the ministry became aware of the gravity of the statements being made in this regard and hastened to issue another statement in which it said that it would increase the area of cotton cultivation from 1.2 million to 1.3 million feddans. All of this is being done with respect to an issue which is to be considered one of life or death as far as this country goes.

What is the view of people in the universities on this?

2. The comprehensive scouring of the Nile bed.

It took the Nile River in Egypt thousands of years to dig out its channel, with its present drops and dimensions, under normal flood conditions in which the river bore massive amounts of silt. There are natural laws linking the geometric characteristics of rivers to the volumes of silt they carry when they are in a stable state. Now that the floods have been removed from Egypt, the channel of

the Nile in one country will bear its water in a permanently clear form and the river will naturally try to attain at a new state of stability conforming to the conditions that have been imposed upon it. The most important adjustment in geometric characteristics the river will require is to lower its drop to the point where it will be able to discharge the added clear water it will be carrying in the future without any tangible effect on the sand on the bottom. If the river is left as it is, it will try to reach a state of equilibrium in three ways:

First, scouring the bed between barrages so that the floor will experience a large drop directly below each barrage and the drop will gradually lessen as the river approaches the following barrage.

Second, adjusting the dimensions of the channel.

Third, lengthening the channel by creating new bends or enlaring existing ones. Since it will not be possible to permit the river to deviate from its present levees, what it will do will be confined to the first and second approaches. The second will result in large drifts along the sides of the channel.

It is obvious that scouring the bed of the channel will threaten to destroy the main barrages if they are not given adequate protection.

The maximum size the river reaches will depend on the maximum volume of discharge the river is to carry in the future. Before it was decided to construct the Tushki drainage system to dispose of the surplus in the lake's reservoir by diverting it into the Western Desert, it seems that it would be impossible to solve the problem of scouring, because discharging the surplus lake water into the channel of the Nile itself would mean discharges which were much greater than requirements for which the maximum estimate was 350 million cubic meters per day. Calculations showed that such a discharge could not be tolerated.

The construction of the Tushki drainage system will greatly lessen the problem of scour but it will not totally eliminate it. I must draw attention to the fact that the research by the Ministry of Irrigation's institutes in this realm were all oriented toward results that had been spelled out in advance, whose purpose was to prove that the scour problem was of no importance, and this is unfortunate.

So far conspicuous scouring has taken place, to an average of about 1 meter directly below each of the major barrages. Even supposing that the discharges the river is to carry in the future will be no greater than current needs, the river will take a long time, perhaps more than 100 years, to reach a state of equilibrium. This means that what has happened so far is not the end. In our calculations we must include the fact that the agricultural expansion projects which have been budgeted for so far will require an increase in the river's discharge.

I hope that people doing research in this field will assume the responsibility of reviewing the Tushki drainage system project the Ministry of Irrigation has

started constructing, because the information I have acquired on this project indicates that the designs which have been made on it will not fulfill its purpose.

I would also like to draw attention to the point that the idea of combatting danger from scouring by drilling holes in barrage piers, an idea that Soviet advisors broached, is very dangerous; as I see it, it will increase the danger to the barrages instead of protecting them. I have learned that preliminary research is going on preparatory to carrying this idea out, and I hope that a committee will be formed which in an urgent fashion will enable me to present my observations in this regard.

3. The continuous regression of the northern Delta coastline.

After the construction of the High Dam, the Nile River began to create a new delta behind the dam; the water the river will be carrying inside Egypt will be consistently clear and the amount of water it discharges into the sea will be very minor. One of the phenomena which were known in advance was the existence of a moderately strong marine current parallel to the Delta coast. This current caused difficulties of navigation at the entrance to the Suez Canal because it bore large amounts of silt to that area during the Nile flood. This necessitated construction of a breakwater into the sea to keep the silt away from the canal entrance.

At the same time, the Nile flood bore large amounts of silt into the sea facing the whole coastline. With the passage of time, the north Delta coast arrived at a state of equilibrium between the scouring process performed by the abovementioned current and the sedimentation process performed by Nile flood. Now that the flooding has been cut off, there is nothing to compensate for the scour resulting from the current. This means that the entire north Delta shoreline will recede until it reaches a new state of equilibrium. It appears as if the Nile wanted to avenge itself against the force we used against it by building a new delta in the south and destroying the old delta it had previously built in the north.

A magazine recently published an article by a geological engineer on the geological effects of the dam project, stating that Cairo would someday become the most beautiful port on the Mediterranean coast. Perhaps there was some exaggeration in that statement, but it contains a serious warning against taking this problem lightly.

/4.7 Exposure of the country's population to poisoning.

It is well known that massive amounts of chemical fertilizer and insecticides are added to the soil in Egypt every year. In the past, the land benefited from an annual cleansing process by flood water which prevented any residue from these materials from accumulating. Now, however, it is deprived of this process, which was tantamount to the process of breathing in humans, and it is reasonable for us to ask where all these materials are going. The percentage the plants absorb is minor and the rest either remains inthe ground or seeps into the Nile through drainage. The Nile River is the sole source of drinking water for all the inhabitants of the country.

In the potable water plants, the water is purified of suspended materials through sedimentation and filtration and purged of bacteria by chlorine, but there is no practical way to rid it of the salts that have been dissolved in it throughout the republic.

So far some birds have disappeared and most beehives have vanished; many people have started complaining about mysterious symptoms for which doctors cannot find an explanation, beyond the presence of toxic materials in the drinking water and some foods. It is worth pointing out that visitors who come to Egypt from abroad find themselves unable to drink the local water and resort to using mineral water imported from abroad.

The percentage of toxins in the water may be minor at present but it is certain that it will increase with each passing year, because the flood of chemical fertilizers and pesticides being added to the soil will not be interrupted. Stopping the use of these materials cannot be considered a practical solution to the problem.

The statement that the continuous ingestion of poisoned water will cause people to acquire immunity against it may be true if the percentage of toxic salts in the water does not exceed a specific limit. However, one cannot rule out the possibility that man will disappear, after the birds and the beehives, if this percentage keeps increasing as the years go by.

5. Corrosion in the foundations of concrete structures

In recent years, the phenomenon of overflow of sewage water in the towns has increased in a disturbing manner and groundwater has started seeping into the basements of many buildings in Cairo. There is much evidence that a complicated problem exists that bespeaks the presence of a number of interrelated factors resulting in an increased percentage of sulphur compounds in the water in the ground, resulting in corrosion in the foundations of buildings where reinforced concrete has been used. This phenomenon was discovered by a professor in Cairo University and the Academy of Scientific Research placed it on its agenda a number of years ago. However, research was not done on it, as a consequence of the state of fragmentation which plagues research agencies in government departments.

Disruptions have appeared in the foundations of the railway tunnels in al-Jizah and Tanta which are attributable to the rise in the groundwater level, whereas no such disruptions occurred in the days of the flood, when the ground was fully saturated with water.

What is important is that there is much evidence of danger from corrosion in reinforced concrete structures underground. Perhaps the rapid emergence of symptoms of corrosion in railway tunnels may be attributed to the shaking they have endured as a result of train traffic in them. Buildings exist whose foundations have undergone corrosion but which have not yet collapsed, and these may be in an unstable state of equilibrium where they will collapse if Egypt is exposed to a severe earthquake -- which is not improbable.

What must be done in this regard?

6. The danger of the spread of plants in watercourses.

It is well known that the watercourses which are plagued by the spread of plants are ones which carry clear water on a permanent basis at a slow rate and minor decline in elevation, such as those in the Sudd area of the upper Nile. In the past in Egypt, plants would spread only in channels carrying clear water. In the canals, however, the flood cycle and the cutoff of sunlight from the channel floor for a long period each year prevented the growth of plants except along the sides.

Now, however, following the termination of the floods, plants have started to proliferate in the drains and channels and in the Nile itself. This is a danger which is threatening to deprive Egypt of a large percentage of its water intake more than what the High Dam has provided.

A short time ago the minister of irrigation said that the loss caused by the plants now equals 40 percent of the savings the High Dam has realized.

If the problem of comprehensive scouring in the Nile channel is solved by breaking the channel down into a series of enclosed areas with modest drops in elevation by means of submerged spillways, as is done in other countries, Egypt will turn into another Sudd area, with the characteristics of the Sudd, whose effects we are trying to circumvent in the upper Nile.

It is permissible to overcome the danger of plants by adding toxic materials to the water, but what will the effects of these materials on people and animals be?

7. The problem of scraping off farmland.

Much talk is taking place on this problem, and it is odd that most of it revolves about the imposition of severe penalties on peasants who scrape off their land, that is, the forcible prevention of such scraping.

I can see that preventing peasants from selling agricultural soil, which is the most precious asset Egypt possesses, to operators of red brick factories engaged in building walls for big buildings in Cairo and other cities is a reasonable measure. However, I consider preventing peasants from using Nile silt to build homes and prepare ordinary fertilizer, as they did in the past when they easily obtained this silt by cleaning out canals, and compelling them to bring cement and clay brick from the places where they are manufactured and to transport their requirements by truck to their property to build their homes, is something which is hard to comprehend.

It is strange that many engineers talk about the elimination of the silt which the Nile provided for us in large amounts every year as if that was one of the benefits of the dam, on grounds that it saves the government the several hundreds of thousands of pounds which it would spend cleaning out the canals each year; the silt was a great boon with an inexhaustible source as far as the Egyptian environment went, in the villages and towns alike.

In another area, some engineers consider that the elimination of the silt from Nile water is of no importance, since the silt does not contain materials beneficial

to plants which cannot be replaced by the artificial application of fertilizer. In my opinion, this view indicates very superficial thinking, since the issue is not just one of chemical composition — there might be other physical and electrial reactions that make the silt very beneficial to the soil which science has not yet managed to discover.

In summary, the elimination of silt has been a great loss for Egypt and we must think seriously about ways of compensating for it.

After this review of the direct side effects of the High Dam, I must devote some attention to two points which I consider of the utmost seriousness which ought to have been taken into account from the beginning in determining the fitness or lack of fitness of executing the dam project in principle, taking into account Egypt's safety and security now and in the future.

The first point bears on the threat of destruction under whose sway Egypt will be living for many years to come. The water contained in the dam reservoir at its stipulated operating level will be no less than 120 billion cubic meters. The presence of this enormous mass of water at a high elevation on Egypt's southern borders is the closest thing to an atomic bomb hanging over the country's head, capable of exploding at any moment. The future is full of possibilities and if something happens which will lead to an uncontrolled rush of water from the reservoir, the destruction that will result in Egypt will be many times greater than what the Hiroshima bomb wrought. In this regard it is worth pointing out tht the Russian advisors in charge of building the dam advised the Egyptian government to take the measure of letting water out of the dam reservoir at a rate of 600 million cubic meters per day so that it could be emptied but quickly in case of war or the threat of war. Unfortunately, however, I can state that discharging clear water from the reservoir at that rate will in itself create destruction on a large scale in the valley downstream from the dam.

The second point bears on the dam's long-term effects. Once the Nile River has finished its task, which it has now begun, of building a new Delta behind itself, Egypt will find itself faced with another geological transformation which is much more dangerous than the one it has recently experienced. At that time the Nile River will have only two alternatives — either to create a new channel via the Western Desert on its way to the Mediterranean or to rush through the valley downstream from the dam which it abandoned many years ago. Naturally, conditions in Egypt will have changed and assumed a character which will not permit the return of flooding. How will matters proceed after that, as far as the population of Egypt at that time is concerned?

It is to be taken for granted that such a transformation will occur only after hundreds of years, but I do not see that that is adequate justification to omit it from our calculations at present.

The Recommended Solution

My personal opinion is that the benefits the High Dam has brought us are to be considered nothing alongside the problems it has and will bring us. Therefore I

recommend that the longterm storage process in the main Nile be eliminated and be shifted to Lake Albert in the upper Nile. This will not necessitate destruction of the dam, just a modification of its function, by restricting it to raising the volume of annual storage from the 5 billion the old Aswan dam used to provide to 9 to 10 billion while continuing fully to protect Egypt from the dangers of high floods. The dam's electricity plant will have to be dismantled, but it might be feasible to use the equipment in it for a project to generate electricity from the Qattarah Depression.

One can envisage the picture after the introduction of the necessary modifications in the region, as follows:

First, the main body of the dam will remain as it is now.

Second, two new dams in two lateral canals on both sides, equipped with apertures adequate to accommodate a discharge of 860 million cubic meters per day under a balanced differential of 2 meters. This is the maximum drainage the Nile channel in Egypt can tolerate without difficulty in the flood season. Naturally one of the two dams will take the place of the existing electricity plant. It is worth mentioning that the preliminary dam design which the board of international experts set forth in 1954 contained two lateral canals on both sides, although in the form of tunnels.

The annual storage level will be 127.00 [meters above sea level] instead of the storage level in the old Aswan Dam of 122.00 [meters]. The highest storage level in the years of high flood will be 133.00. In this regard one could refer to an old project which Sir Murdoch McDonald presented tin 1945 to raise the old Aswan Dam to protect Egypt from the dangers of high floods.

Since Egypt will lose its share of the benefit it was estimated it would acquire through the High Dam under the 1959 Nile Water Agreement, it must be compensated for that by getting an increased share of the benefits anticipated from the storage and supply projects in the upper Nile. The Sudan's share will continue to be codified as it is, in addition to the water it acquires through the above-mentioned projects.

In order for the expected benefits from the supply projects in the Sudd area to be realized, it will be necessary to convert Lake Albert into a long-term reservoir as quickly as possible. This will greatly help reduce losses, in the Sudd area on the one hand and guarantee the annual reservoir fill at Aswan every year on the other.

The Ministry of Irrigation has already taken a decision to eliminate the Jabal Awliya' reservoir. This decision must be abrogated and the situation restored to its previous state as regards the Jabal Awliya' reservoir.

A Concluding Observation

The factor of time, in the subject we are concerned with, is of the utmost importance. Perhaps it would be useful for me to reiterate, again, what Dr 'Abd-al-Raziq Sidqi said, which is:

"The issue does not admit of intellectual speculation, hesitant measures or cautious steps; it is necessary to be decisive, resolute, and firm and act quickly, before it is too late."

In another area, the establishment of plans for this matter on long-term bases is to be considered a matter of the utmost importance as well. As the president said, in one of his advisory statements, "This requires the performance of a serious scientific study which will embrace all aspects and take all problems and circumstances that exist now and are expected in the future into consideration."

Unless we believe in these principles and work on their behalf, Egypt will find itself in a predicament someday and God alone will know how to extricate it from it.

The Egyptian Academy of Scientific Culture

The academy was established in 1930 and celebrated its golden jubilee in 1980.

It brings together Egyptian scholars specializing in various fields -- doctors, engineers, agricultural experts, geologists, educators, chemists and so on.

The goals of the institute are to spread scientific culture among intellectuals who are not specialists, discuss national projects and express scientific opinions on them.

The idea for the academy arose in 1919 when scientific delegations to European countries proliferated and the delegates returned from their missions after acquiring various educational backgrounds in various languages. It was decided that Arab language would be the medium of discourse among the delegates who returned, so that they could be brought closer together and an Egyptian scientific cultural school could be established.

The early pioneers of the academy were:

Dr 'Ali Ibrahim, surgeon; Eng Husayn Sirri, irrigation and dam engineer; Tawfiq al-Hinnawi, agriculture; 'Ali Hasan and Ahmad Zaki, chemists; and Hasan Sadiq, Egypt's first engineer. The first science journalist in Egypt, Fu'ad Sarruf, was in their group.

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CSO: 4504/17

UNIDENTIFIED SOURCE INFORMS OF COUP BY END OF JULY

Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 8 Jul 81 p 1

[Text]

June 9, 1981

The Islamic Revolutionary Council,
Tehran.

Gentlemen,

Early last year I informed you of an operation to release the hostages in the American Embassy in Tehran; afterwards I have written four letters to inform you of undertakings against Iran's security. Now, I would like to let you know some new data concerning the security of the Islamic Revolution.

According to an American CIA officer, the Reagan Administration has set up a joint body of officials from the State Department, the CIA, the Pentagon, the National Security Council and the Energy Department to work out several scenarios for the American activities in Iran. The experts from this body were worried by a future strengthening of the positions of the radicals. They are of the opinion that the developments in the country and the war with Iraq favor the contradictions between the groupings of Beheshti and President Banisadr that are expected to become particularly sharp after Khomeini's death or in case of an adverse outcome of the military conflict with Iraq. Bearing in mind that almost all the state machine is run by the radicals, Banisadr is not believed to be able to win the battle legally and without their assistance. The radicals are said to be aspiring after amending the Constitution, ousting Banisadr and having the situation in the country under their control. For the time being this danger has been averted by Khomeini himself by confirming Banisadr's constitutional authorities and the functioning of the Supreme Defense Council headed by him. To avoid such developments, the United States is searching for ways to strengthening Banisadr's positions and boosting the bourgeois parties paying attention to its positions within their leaderships. The United States relies to a great extent on the military conflict with Iraq and makes use of its own channels to prolong it hoping that the war would result into a consolidation of the Iranian Armed Forces indispensable for a military coup d'etat.

To eliminate the clergy from power and strengthen his own positions, Banisadr accused the Mullahs of being poor economists, short-sighted politicians and unskilful strategists. To this end, in late September 1980 Banisadr's adviser Sanjabi contacted the Turkish Ambassador in Tehran and asked him to be a mediator for the establishment of secret contacts with the United States. In early October, 1980, Banisadr had an appointment with the Turkish Ambassador in the presence of Sanjabi. Banisadr gave detailed information about the political and military situation in the country and the difficulties caused by Khomeini's lack of realism in politics; then, he asked him to pass this information on to the government of the United States; he also asked Turkey to play the role of a mediator for the establishment of secret contacts with the United States and set an appointment for an envoy of Banisadr with a highly-placed U.S. official in Ankara. The contacts with Turkey were maintained under the guise of trade negotiations.

Thus, on November 12, or 13, 1980 the talks took place in Ankara. The American side was represented by Gen. David Jones, Chairman of the Council of the Chiefs of Staff of the U.S. armed forces, who was on an official visit to Turkey at that time. These talks were resumed in top secrecy by the Reagan Administration.

The new Reagan Administration takes measures to gradually normalize its relations with Iran, to strengthen its contacts with the Iranian businessmen and the liberal bourgeoisie headed by Banisadr who, they hope, would eliminate the radicals. Actually, they are aware that the clergymen still play an important role in the political life of Iran; therefore, the liberal bourgeoisie should work out a compromise with the

clergymen but in order to have the real power in Iran in their own hands the clergymen will be eliminated from power after building up a coalition with them. Thus, they wouldn't stir up anti-American feelings in Iran nor tensions in the international arena.

To impair and topple Khomeini's regime, they also rely on the Iranian exiles. Not long ago the leaders of the Iranian exiles gave the American government a report on the situation in Iran and the opportunities for a political change. They have pointed out in it that by the end of July 1981 a coup d'etat will be carried out; it was masterminded by Gen. Aryana, former Chief of Staff of the shah's army now residing in Paris and highly respected by former shah's army officers who were reinstated in the Army in connection with the war. The leaders of the Iranian exiles keep close contacts with the late shah's son but are financially and materially supported by the United States.

Large groups have been dispatched to Iran in order to lay the grounds for a mutiny through terrorist and subversive activities and organizing the anti-Khomeini forces. These groups are trained in Egypt and West Germany by Americans. The by-front areas where well-armed divisions have been stationed and where the influence of the Mullahs is weaker will be turned into a battlefield.

According to the Reagan Administration, the leaders of the Iranian exiles and the army generals among them will be the rulers of Iran after the overthrow of Khomeini. Bakhtiar is said to be a poor politician without opportunities while Banisadr will be used as a tool to eliminate the radicals. A strict military regime will be imposed in Iran.

From a reliable source – a Rumanian diplomat – I came to know that in late 1980 Rumanian-Iraqi negotiations on weapons and spare-parts supplies for the Iraqi army were held. Rumania is to supply tanks, trucks, guns, munitions and spare parts to Iraq, according to the agreement they reached. Some of the weapon supplies will be Rumanian ones while the rest will be Egyptian and Israeli ones. Though showing neutrality regarding the Iran-Iraq conflict, the Chinese government has agreed to supply weapons and munitions to Iraq through Rumania. With regard to this, on February 22, 1981 new bilateral negotiations were held between the Iraqi minister of defense and Kornel Burtika, vice-First minister of the Rumanian government and Minister for Foreign trade who was on a visit to Iraq. They discussed the military cooperation between both countries and reached an agreement to have the military supplies to Iraq increased. The Rumanian side was to deliver 1,300 trucks, the munitions and the guns for the Iraqi army within 10 months.

In return for Rumania's readiness to militarily assist Iraq, the Iraqi government let some Rumanian firms build up cement plants and some other projects. The Rumanian side will be privileged in concluding contracts.

The Rumanian diplomat said that Rumania makes the most of the Iran-Iraq war.

On getting further information concerning Iran's security I shall consider it my duty to let you know it though it is not an easy job as some security problems might come up.

Most respectfully yours

CSO: 4600/75

GUIDELINES FOR PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION PRESENTED

Tehran KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL in English 7 Jul 81 p 2

[Editorial by Zainab]

[Text]

Seventeen days from now, the second president of the Islamic Republic of Iran will be elected through the direct votes of the nation. In light of the current political developments and the crucial role of the presidency in the Islamic Republic, as determined by the Constitution, we shall attempt to clarify the significance of this institution.

The Muslim nation of Iran will vote for the second time in less than two years, for a president capable of serving the Islamic Republic in all dimensions. The nation will go to the polls this time fortified with a valuable experience. If the nation only had general and maybe vague criteria in mind for its president last year, now, this nation has actual experience and knows well what characteristics to search for and what to avoid in its president. This year, the nation having completed its third revolution has identified all compromising and eclectic lines and knows well what personality traits signal the incompetence and weakness of presidential candidates. The nation will no longer be deceived by the Islamic appearances of various figures but it will regard the candidates' Islamic and independent manner of thought as a major determining factor.

In order to understand the significance of this election particularly in this time interval, we refer to the constitutional article which specifies the responsibilities of the president.

Article 113 states: "The President is responsible for implementing the Constitution, regulating the three branches of the government and directing the Executive branch in cases which relate directly to the leader."

Consequently, the president must primarily be the guardian of the Islamic Republic, insuring the implementation of the Constitution, the fruit of the blood of 70 thousand martyrs. He not only must be familiar but must firmly believe and adhere to the underlying principles of this Constitution. Negligence of this responsibility leads to deviation within the Republic for which the president would be directly responsible. Article 122 states: "The President is responsible to the nation within the limits of his duties and authority."

The second responsibility of the president which determines in reality the general line of the Republic is the suggestion of a prime minister to the Majlis. Article 124 states: "The president shall suggest an individual to assume the position of the prime minister". The executive branch of the Republic, thus is essentially directed by the presidency. His correct and profound understanding can lead to the establishment of an efficient and committed government, coordinated with the Majlis. In the case of the former president, the decisiveness of the Majlis compelled Banisadr to suggest a committed figure like Raja'i and thus a liable government was established contrary to the will of Banisadr. Although the Majlis serves as a controlling body in this matter, and can prevent most mistakes, the choice of the president for the prime ministerial candidates is a good indication of the direction the president aims to take.

Once the prime minister is determined, the guardian role of the president does not cease: he is responsible to monitor and approve the appointments of all the cabinet ministers. Actually, the Constitution of the Islamic Republic has imposed three controlling bodies for this sensitive process of establishing the cabinet: the approval of the prime minister, the president and ultimately the Consultative Assembly (Majlis). This is to ensure that committed individuals worthy of serving the Mostaz'afin occupy these posts..

Article 133 states: "Ministers shall be appointed as proposed by the prime minister and approval by the president and shall be presented to the Assembly for receiving a vote of confidence."

Even after the appointment of the cabinet and the resumption of its work, the president remains responsible for the governments decrees and regulations. Upon reviewing them, he has the right to send them back for further study.

Article 126 states: "Government decrees and regulations after being approved by the council of ministers shall be brought to the attention of the President. Should the President feel that such regulations contravene the current rules of the nation, he will send them back to the council of ministers for review giving due reasons for not accepting them."

Hence, here again we see three controls enforced upon governmental decrees, insuring their correct direction and efficiency: the council of ministers, the Majlis and the presidency. Each of these institutions and particularly the president should scrutinize carefully the contents of the decrees and regulations to call to the government's attention any ambiguity or deviation from the Constitution.

Bearing the bitter but useful experience of the power of the presidency in mind, the nation will go to the polls with hearts overflowing with commitment to Islam and the line of the Imam and brimming with hatred against America and deviated Westernized elements serving them. The elections in Iran, like the Revolution itself is not allocated to one particular stratum or to the intellectuals alone. The overwhelming majority of the nation is today vigilant, present on the scene and anxious to step forward and choose its president and thus determine the fate of its country and revolution.

CSO: 4600/765

TUDEH PARTY SECRETARY-GENERAL NOMINATED FOR PRESIDENCY

Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 11 Jul 81 p 1

[Commentary by Seyyed Hoseyn Musavian: "Russian Candidature for Iran's Presidency"]

[Text]

AFTER THE political incompetence of ex-president Banisadr was pronounced on by the Islamic Consultative Assembly, the revolutionized society of Iran once again concentrates on a fresh presidential campaign.

The Iranians have achieved precious experience stemming from the election of Banisadr as the first president of the Islamic Republic regime.

As Banisadr was a pro-Western liberal who was exclusively pre-occupied with the preservation of the U.S. interests in Iran, this fact in particular bears on the experience spoken of. During his presidency he committed many unforgivable crimes. The Iranian nation following on this experience will never allow the opportunist Superpowers to make a puppet of it.

In the new presidential election, the Islamic Republic of Iran can still be vulnerable to the conspiracies contrived by the imperialistic regime.

Kianouri, a member of Iran's Tudeh Party put himself forward as a candidate for the post of president. The bid for candidacy cannot be dismissed as a trivial event but should be looked on as a matter that calls for some serious thinking.

The Russian oriented party called the Tudeh has once again made bold to splash itself on the political scenario in Iran and this time more intensely. But why?

The Tudeh Party has masqueraded as the mutual ally of the faithful followers in the Imam's line. The members of the party have always condoned and agreed with the policies adopted by the Islamic Republican regime. It is too simplistic a view to assume that the Tudeh Party with its Communistic ideologies and its total denials of God, will continue to string along as the genuine ally of the advocates of the Imam's line, one that derives from strictly Islamic principles.

What looks like an alliance of the Tudeh Party with the regime is in fact a phoney effort to derive the advantages of being associated with Moslems who hold their supreme faith in Islamic values.

While the dismissal of ex-president Banisadr from office, spelt the end of the opportunistic objectives of the U.S., it now seems to be the turn of the Soviet Union, which is seeking to impose its puppet the Tudeh Party on the nation in these critical times.

Presidency, next to the leadership, is a most vital and indeed a most crucial task and the Soviet Union and the Tudeh Party are not beyond realizing this. In fact the Tudeh Party seem to be now holding out its hand for its wages in return for its pretentious, phoney alliance and approval of the principles of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Imam's line for over 2 years. And the price they ask appears to be nothing less than the presidency of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

However, it should be remembered that the Soviet Union and her splinter group proteges have grossly misconstrued their strategy and are wrong if they believe that the alert Iranian nation will provide them with such a chance.

The nation has moved along the righteous path of Islam and has despite the Iraqi-imposed war and the political frictions it has been prey to, to keep close to this righteous Islamic path. Consequently the Iranian nation which is now much richer by its experience will only cast their vote of confidence for a devout Moslem president whose beliefs are rooted in the convictions of Velayat Faqih and Islamic principles for preservation of the sacred blood of the martyrs of Islam. It seems to us that such praiseworth characteristics are crystallized in the Prime Minister Rajai. A vote by the nation for Rajai will be indeed the best insurance against the interference in Iran by the expansionist Superpowers.

CSO: 4600/74

AMBASSADOR NABAVI WARNS KRUPP TO DROP 'REDUNDANCIES'

Paris AN-NAHAR ARAB REPORT & MEMO in English No 24 15 Jun 81 p 9

[Text] The Iranian ambassador to Bonn has warned that his country could use its 25 per cent blocking stake in the West German giant steel firm Krupp to stop proposed redundancies. Ambassador Mehdi Nabavi is reported to have told members of Krupp's Workers Council, who visited him last week, that laying off workers went against the principles of the Islamic Revolution.

The statement was made on the eve of a visit by Iranian Industry Minister Mahmoud Ahmadzadeh, who was due to attend a Krupp Supervisory Board meeting to discuss a restructuring plan for the firm. Mr Ahmadzadeh has been reported to have blocked the plan at a prior meeting last month.

Iran acquired its minority blocking share of 25 per cent during the regime of the late Shah, and the revolutionary authorities have retained the stake.

If the Iranians succeed in blocking the redundancy decision, which is part of the restructuring plan, it could have a devastating effect on Iran's relations with other Western countries. Foreign companies which already have or might have contemplated Iranian participation could face similar impositions of Koranic principles, which Mr Nabavi said, stipulated that man should live by the fruits of his labour.

CSO: 4600/67

CONTRIBUTIONS TO BUILD UNIVERSITIES IN YAR, DJIBOUTI, MAURITANIA CITED

Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 25 May 81 p 7

[Article: "Participation in Building National Universities in YAR, Mauritania and Djibouti Within Framework of Country's Pan-Arab Direction"]

[Text] Jasim Muhammad Khalaf, the minister of higher education and scientific research, has stated that the country will contribute to building national universities in YAR [Yemen Arab Republic], Mauritania and Djibouti as part of the aid the revolution government advances to the fraternal Arab countries.

In a statement to the IRAQI NEWS AGENCY on the results achieved by the conference of the Arab ministers of higher education which concluded its proceedings in Algiers last Thursday, the minister said that the conference has recommended the establishment of an Arab studies and research center which Iraq will support because of its major importance in achieving a scientific balance in the research and studies submitted in all the Arab universities and because it will be a data center that will contribute to the human and material development of all the Arab countries.

The minister has added that the conference also discussed the need to create a center to manage Arabization affairs, the question of the transfer of technology and the question of how to channel university education to achieve advanced technological systems. The conference also underlined the issue of the university's relationship with society and of the university's leadership on society. In discussing this issue, we sought guidance from the instructions which leader and President Saddam Hussein gave in his meeting with the Mosul University professors and in which his excellency stressed that the university is a center which radiates and reflects reality with a futuristic visualization tied to development indicators in the sectoral plans that seek to realize comprehensive revival in the state's official establishments and in all the popular organizations.

The minister has further pointed out that the Iraqi delegation reviewed before the conference the special importance which Iraq attaches to the various levels of higher education and to its role in creating comprehensive pan-Arab development. The minister referred to the invaluable directives of leader and President Saddam Hussein in this regard and to the president's constant eagerness to enrich the procession of higher education and of scientific research with pioneer experiences that enable this education and research to perform their national and pan-Arab tasks.

8494
CSO: 4303/26

BRIEFS

PROVINCIAL SERVICE PROJECTS--The municipal departments last year completed service projects in all the governorates which cost 524,734,000 dinars. The projects included opening, paving and asphalting internal roads and their supporting shoulders, constructing sewers, building bridges, purchasing road construction equipment for 31,043,000 dinars and, building parks, playgrounds, markets, hotels and casinos at a cost of 8,703,000 dinars. The projects also included the construction of government buildings, houses for civil servants, fire houses and fire engines and other facilities at a cost of 64,618,000 dinars, buildings plants and purchasing service machinery, vehicles and cars at a cost of 1,023,000 dinars, garages and warehouses at a cost of 402,000 dinars and various schools, halls, storehouses, boarding sections, laboratories, libraries and educational projects at a cost of 14.7 million dinars. They also included health and recreational projects costing 273,013,000 dinars, various plants and workshops at a cost of 7,629,000 dinars, purchasing buses for provincial passenger transportation establishments and building garages at a cost of 108,785,000 dinars and building residential houses for the various sectors at a cost of 14 million dinars, in addition to other miscellaneous projects. [Text] [Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 25 May 81 p 7] 8494

REAL ESTATE BANK ACTIVITIES--Lubayd 'Abd-al-Qadir, the general manager of the Real Estate Bank, has asserted that the bank is fully prepared to meet the requests of all the citizens who wish to purchase or build homes or to enlarge their homes, thanks to the large financial resources made available to it by the party and revolution leadership. In a statement to the IRAQI NEWS AGENCY, the general director added that the bank's financial resources, excluding its capital, amount to 500 million dinars and that the sums it has loaned the citizens in the form of loans or credits amounted to 800 million dinars by the end of last April. He further added that the sums which the bank loaned from the end of last September until March 1981 amounted to 378,995,000 dinars, despite the conditions of the war which our struggling country is waging against the racist Persians. Lubayd 'Abd-al-Qadir has also pointed out that the bank loaned the citizens a sum of 245,034,000 dinars from January to August 1980 and that the number of transactions concluded during this period amounted to 64,341 transactions. He also said that the sum of the loans given by the bank to the citizens from the beginning of the 17 July revolution until the end of last year amounted to 1,172,620,000 dinars. [Text] [Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 25 May 81 p 72] 8494

CSO: 4304/26

NATION SEEKS JOINT-VENTURE PARTNERS

London 8 DAYS in English No 25, 27 Jun 81 pp 38-39

[Article by Annie King-Underwood]

[Text]

DESPITE the advantageous terms offered by Jordan, British companies are still wary about participating in joint ventures with Jordanian enterprises. The political instability of the region is a major factor here, and as one British businessman explained: 'The rewards from a joint venture in Jordan can be sizeable, but they have to be attained in a short period, something like three years. This is mainly because the political atmosphere in the area is not very stable.'

During the last two months, Jordan has despatched high-powered delegations into the UK in order to draw the attention of business circles to the country's possibilities. Two weeks ago, the Jordanian trade and industry minister, Walid Asfour, arrived accompanied by the secretary of the national planning council, Basil Jardaneh, and the director of industry, Akram Karmoul.

The minister held talks with the UK Minister for Trade, Cecil Parkinson, Secretary of State for Trade John Biffen, and Minister of State for Industry Norman Tebbitt. At the same time a delegation from the Amman Chamber of Commerce and Industry headed by director Ali Dajani, was in the country trying to establish closer contacts with British companies.

Under Jordan's new Five Year Plan, details of which were announced last March, industry and mining get the largest allocation ($2bn), which represents 22 per cent of total expenditure. This highlights the Jordanian planners' new philosophy of encouraging and developing the industrial sector. The planners also consider that the best way to acquire technical expertise from developed and industrialised countries is to offer them advantageous terms for joint ventures.

One businessman told *8 Days*: 'The tax holidays offered by Jordan are the best in the area. You cannot find any country giving a nine-year tax-free period (outside the Amman area) or one of seven years (in the Amman area).' In the new plan the government's system of tax exemptions for investors, known as the 'encouragement of investment' law, is to be improved.

At a seminar organised by the Confederation of British Industry on 11 June, Asfour explained to British businessmen that under Jordanian laws, foreign investors were protected against nationalisation and government actions. He added that the current seven-nine year period of tax exemption is being reviewed for extension. In addition, there are no restrictions on taking money out of Jordan. 'Money can be taken out in any currency wished by investors,' said Asfour, with the cryptic rider: 'It is much easier to take money out of the country than to bring it in.'

Unlike many other countries resorting to joint ventures to promote development, Jordan does not have a vast pool of labour. Jordan's acute shortage of unskilled workers is particularly evident on Amman's building sites.

According to Asfour, 52 per cent of Jordan's population is under the age of 15.

Consequently, the country has placed training and education high on its list of priorities.

It is clear that the facilities Jordan is offering will primarily attract medium-sized companies. 'The country cannot yet cope with high-technology industry,' said a British businessman who is in the process of negotiating a joint-venture deal in Jordan.

CSO: 4300/43

SAUDI ROLE AS MEDIATOR IN CRISIS DISCUSSED

London 8 DAYS in English No 23, 13 Jun 81 pp 16-18

[Text]

WHILE THE US has high hopes of current Saudi efforts to resolve the crisis over Lebanon, Syrian Foreign Minister Abdel Halim Khaddam last week denounced US diplomacy as being in favour of Israel and said that Saudi Arabia would not play the role of mediator between Syria and the rejectionist front.

Khaddam said that in the course of the shuttle by the US special envoy, 'No definite questions have been put to us by Philip Habib, only Israeli demands.' And he asserted: 'Our missiles entered Lebanon to remain, not to come out.'

The Syrian foreign minister's statements in an interview with a UAE reporter, were given prominence by the Syrian government newspaper *Tishrin*. Some highly placed supporters of President Hafez Assad said that *Tishrin*'s report seemed largely meant as a message to the Arab world that Syria would not give way to outside pressure to soften its stand in the current crisis. At the same time, they said, it was meant to tell other Arabs that Saudi Arabia was not twisting Syria's arm to ease the crisis.

Saudi Arabia's King Khalid sent a letter to Assad at the end of May, and the Saudi delegate was due to meet representatives from Syria, Lebanon and Kuwait in Lebanon last week at an important session of the Arab follow-up committee on Lebanon. There were pledges from both sides to restrain the fighting so that the meeting could take place amid some semblance of a ceasefire.

The aim of meeting was to produce a set of practical measures to get the warring parties within Lebanon to negotiate around the table — rather than continue to hammer at each other across the nine kilometre stretch of ruins which constitutes the demarcation line between Beirut's two sectors.

Saudi Arabia and Kuwait are the main financers of the Arab Deterrent Force in Lebanon. The Saudis are keen to take the lead in persuading the Lebanese government, the various factions within the country, and the Syrians to work out a formula to produce an easing of tensions. Saudi leverage on Syria and the Lebanese mainly involves its willingness to resume multi-million dollar payments to finance the rebuilding of the Lebanese army and to contribute to reconstruction efforts in Lebanon.

While the Saudis may share some of the American concern about international tensions over Lebanon, they do not view the problem as a 'missile crisis' which can be defused by the removal of Syrian missiles from the Bekaa valley. There are signs of differing approaches to this question within the US government itself. As Philip Habib was briefing some Senate and House leaders after his recent return to Washington, both houses introduced resolutions calling for a ceasefire in Lebanon, and for the removal of all Syrian missiles from the Bekaa valley. The resolutions were privately criticised by State Department officials, who felt the Congressional actions put too much pressure on Syria.

What Washington really looks to Saudi mediation to solve is not the missile crisis, but the conflict between Syria and Lebanese Phalangists. Saudi Arabia could use its influence to carve out a modus

vivendi between the Arab Deterrent Forces (ADF) and Bashir Gemayel's Phalangist militias. That would allow divided Lebanon to catch its breath, starting up once again the complicated process called national agreement.

As for the missile crisis, the Saudis have apparently told the United States that a withdrawal of Syrian missiles from Bekaa depends on US recognition of the Palestinian problem, a condition the US finds unacceptable. Everything, then, is revolving around the Palestinian question. Until a decision is made to at least deal with the question, there can be no peace in the Middle East, and the world will continue to be weighed down by the risk of a local war becoming international.

According to one US official, Habib received assurances from Begin that he would not attack Syrian positions while he was gone, but this pledge did not hold for Palestinian positions in Lebanon. Habib did not want to be in the area when Israel attacked the Palestinians.

King Hussein of Jordan denounced Israel last week for its part in the crisis over Syrian missiles in Lebanon, and described the situation as "very delicate, disturbingly dangerous and explosive."

When asked if his government would directly aid Syria should Israel carry out its threat to use military force to remove the missiles, Hussein said: "Jordan already has its hands full on the longest confrontation line with Israel." The King, in an hour-long interview with western reporters, was implicitly critical of Syria's peacekeeping role in Lebanon, and he appeared to criticize American mediation efforts to end the crisis.

Jordan joined in endorsing a resolution last month at an Arab League meeting in Tunis that pledged Arab military and political support to the Syrians should the Israelis attack. The King said, however, that the situation cannot be permitted to go on like this. "There has been enough suffering, bloodshed and losses in Lebanon, and there is enough danger to all of us." Hussein implicitly criticized the Syrians for the way in which their forces have carried out their peacekeeping role in Lebanon since they were sent there in 1976 to enforce the truce.

Syria and Jordan have been feuding for several months, largely over the Syrians' charge that Hussein supported a terrorist group that has killed leading members of Syria's ruling Alawite Muslim minority. President Assad is an Alawite Muslim. Jordan has repeatedly denied the accusation. Another source of tension has been Jordan's strong support for Iraq in the war with Iran. Assad has supported Iran.

When the King visited Moscow last week, he joined with Soviet leaders in calling for a Middle East peace conference that would include the Arabs, the Israelis, the United States and the Soviet Union. The United States is opposed to such a meeting.

Hussein said last week that representatives of Western European nations should also be invited to any such conference. And he appeared to criticize American mediation efforts in the Lebanese crisis, saying, "it is hard to accept a particular emphasis on the so-called missile crisis and yet meet with total silence on Israeli raids and attacks."

Egypt is among several countries which are reassessing their regional roles in the wake of the Lebanon crisis. Egypt is using this opportunity to strengthen its version of a peacemaking role, while at the same time trying to break its isolation in the Arab world by adopting a stronger stand over the Jerusalem issue. This would placate not only the Saudis, but also Egyptian internal opposition, in particular the Muslim Brotherhood.

Opposition to Sadat is gaining strength, but it is still muted. There are a considerable number of officers who are critical of, if not completely opposed to, the results of Camp David. The removal of many officers to diplomatic posts and early retirement attests to this. Spontaneous demonstrations both by the relatively small leftist elements (academics and students) and the very large Muslim Brotherhood organization is a further indication.

All oppose the results of Camp David but for different reasons. Many of the officers do because there has been no substantial gains on the question of the Palestinians. Those of the left go further by arguing that no real economic benefit has accrued from the association with the USA and the EEC.

Those on the right, that is those who are associated with the Brotherhood, argue that western presence, and Israeli presence in Egypt, undermines the moral and social values of Islamic society, that Egypt has become a pawn of the imperialists, and that the common man, the pious Muslim, not only has not reaped any economic benefits, but his sacrifices on the battlefield during

the past thirty years have been in vain. Futhermore, Sadat in their view has effectively sold out Jerusalem, the most emotionally charged issue in the affair.

For these reasons Sadat has called a hasty meeting with Begin, and has been eager to pursue private meetings with the Saudis. Ironically, Egypt's leadership appears to prefer a Begin electoral victory over Peres on the grounds that it is better to deal with 'the devil you know'. But it is quite clear that Sadat must placate his opposition and thus is focussing on the Jerusalem issue. This could work to Begin's advantage in that the Jerusalem issue would force Begin publicly to resist Sadat's stance, and swing more votes in his favour. Even the most liberal Israelis would side with him on such an issue.

Well-informed Egyptian sources maintain that one of the main motives for the Sinai meeting — ostensibly about Lebanon — was to give Begin's election chances a boost, and that the later meeting with opposition leader Shimon Peres was announced to balance it off. They point out that 16 months ago the Egyptian president stated that he would not be meeting with Begin until after the election. Sadat hopes by his stance on Jerusalem to attract the attention of the Saudis with a view to a rapprochement in future.

Meanwhile the role within Lebanon of Egypt's eastern neighbour Libya, has come in for increasing publicity over the past two weeks. This is seen by some Arab observers as a campaign to introduce a 'Qaddafi factor' into the Lebanon equation.

Whatever the Libyan presence, these observers feel that it is within the Arab League mandate and with Lebanese government approval. 'They are playing a more active part, but still a legitimate one,' said one Arab diplomat. 'All Arab countries are pledged to help with peacekeeping and to support the Palestinian struggle.'

Libyan relations with the PLO deteriorated to crisis point in December 1979, but now appear to be moving into a period of unprecedented warmth. In May, Arafat himself paid two visits to Tripoli in the space of ten days — a highly unusual occurrence for any Arab state. This inevitably led to speculation of an increase in military cooperation and Libyan participation alongside the Palestinians in South Lebanon, especially in view of Palestinian expectations that the Israelis will use the current crisis to justify a major drive against the PLO.

Until recently, most of the Libyan involvement was under the auspices of Palestinian groups closest to Tripoli — notably Ahmad Jibril's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC), which was the first to deploy the Libyan-supplied BM21 multiple rocket launchers. These were also used against Saad Haddad's enclave and Israel itself for the first time in early April. It was to PFLP-GC units in the south that the Libyan soldiers (estimates range from double figures to an upper limit of 300), were largely seconded, and the four Libyans killed on 28 May were first announced as PFLP-GC 'martyrs'. But the burgeoning of Libyan relations with the PLO makes it likely that there will be more intense cooperation with the PLO itself and its dominant group, Arafat's own Fatah, in the months to come. One informed PLO source did not rule out such a development, and said that at the least, the equipment destroyed in the Israeli raids would be replaced.

For the Palestinians, the Libyan connection means a good deal in terms of the armoury at their disposal, and direct Libyan involvement on the ground whatever the scale, is welcomed as an assurance that the Palestinians and Syrians are not entirely alone in fighting a battle which all the Arab states agree is a pan-Arab responsibility.

Philip Habib: Profile of a Shuttle Diplomat

US MEDIATOR Philip Habib, 61 year old son of an immigrant Catholic Lebanese grocer, looks the part, *writes Russell Warren Howe*. He is overweight, short, balding, unprepossessing, humorous, demonstrative, blunt and even coarse, and he believes, like his late father, in the seven-day week. When two heart attacks forced his retirement two years ago, he was the Under-Secretary for political affairs — the highest post available to a US career diplomat. Just as most black American diplomats shun Africa, so Habib, in common with other Arab or Jewish American diplomats, avoided the Middle East throughout his career until sheer seniority put him wherever the action was.

On his present mission, he is in many ways operating with even more freedom than Kissinger, whom he admires but detests. 'Since we haven't a real policy, he's a sort of pro-consul,' a State Department source told *8 Days*.

An Arab diplomat who knows Habib well says: 'he keeps his own counsel, muffling his thoughts with banter. But he's not devious like Kissinger.'

CSO: 4300/43

COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY SAID TO BE THRIVING

London 8 DAYS in English No 24, 20 Jun 81 pp 34-35

[Article by Earleen Tatro]

[Excerpt]

IT IS not 'business as usual' these days in Beirut, but business does go on — with the legendary Lebanese flair for commerce aided by tacit trade-offs among the antag[illegible]s. As the artillery duels between the militant Christian Phalangists and Syrian troops from the Arab peacekeeping force entered their eleventh week, the short-term hope was for a ceasefire lasting more than a few hours and the long-term hope was for a permanent end to the sectarian violence that has wracked the country since the 1975-76 civil war.

Traffic between east Beirut, which is predominantly Christian, and the west of the city, which is mostly Muslim, is officially discouraged by the government and unofficially — but more vehemently — by snipers and artillery gunners. However, vital commodities still make it through the no-man's land bordering the mid-city 'Green Line'. Flour, cooking gas and mineral water are brought by lorry into west Beirut from the east, while petrol, meat and vegetables are hauled to the east from the west.

Banks, even those near the Green Line, boast that they have not closed for a single day since the latest trouble began. 'It seems almost like economic activity has been given a chance,' said one western banker. 'In the mornings there's usually not much shelling, and then it starts up in the afternoon.'

In Zahle, where Syrian tanks are besieging the Phalangist militia who moved into the city this spring, the Lebanon Central Bank's branch office usually manages to open a couple of days a week to provide liquidity for local banks. In Beirut, paperwork has slowed because many secretarial and clerical workers are unable to commute across the Green Line to their jobs. Before 'the events' or 'al hawadess', as the Lebanese refer to the violence, cheques were cleared on the day of deposit. Now such inter-bank transactions are done only once or twice a week when they involve banks with headquarters on opposite sides of the Green Line.

Businesses have provided hotel rooms or flats close to places of employment for key personnel who live on the opposite side of the city. One prestigious restaurant stayed open for lunch even when surface-to-surface missiles flew overhead.

A few ships, mostly ageing Lebanese-registered freighters, still bring cargoes into the port of Beirut, although they sometimes lie in wait for days in nearby waters before venturing into the harbour, which straddles the Green Line. Beirut international airport was closed for 22 days after shells started dropping into the sand around the runway, but it reopened on 13 May and a dozen airlines have resumed operations, with outbound flights usually carrying twice as many passengers as incoming ones.

Middle East Airlines, the national flag carriers, reports a 20 per cent drop in departing passengers and a 60 per cent drop in arriving passengers.

'That's about a 40 per cent decline altogether,' Asad Nasr, MEA's chairman and president, told *8 Days*. 'I think this is a reflection of the state of business in general, because most of our traffic is business or business-related traffic.'

MEA, Nasr said, was reluctant to abandon any of its scheduled flights, even though it had no hope of filling most of them to the break-even point. Instead, the airline has combined some of its flights. For example, non-stop flights between Beirut and London and Beirut and Rome were merged into a Beirut-Rome-London route. 'Even with these combinations, we are operating with an average flight load of 43 per cent. But it would be 22 per cent if we were using two aeroplanes,' Nasr said.

The crunch caught MEA in what was not expected to be a good year anyway. The best the airline had hoped for was a break-even budget in 1981 — and that requires an average flight load of 57 per cent. MEA's jets were about 53 to 54 per cent full before 'the events', with seasonal increase this summer expected to boost the year-long average to the budgeted 57 per cent.

'Now, however, very few routes are very good. They are bad and very bad,' said Nasr. The Beirut-Cairo flight is still good, as are Beirut flights to Bahrain and Doha, with Dhahran and Jeddah still relatively strong. 'Nicosia,' Nasr added wryly, 'is strong in one direction — out.'

While Beirut airport was closed, MEA lost Lebanese £1.2m daily — or a total of £26.4m sterling, between $6m and $7m at today's fluctuating exchange rates. Since the airport reopened, MEA's daily loss is down to L£635,000 about $155,000.

These losses follow a year in which MEA posted a profit L£9m, or less than one per cent of its total revenue, 'which is very, very low in terms of the size of our operation,' Nasr said. Fortunately, 1979 was a good year — in fact, MEA's best ever — with profits of L£51.1m, or between $14m and $16m at the rates prevailing then.

It is an unfortunate situation, said Nasr, with the economy [illegible] has been a predictable reduced recession in the area on hopes an economic recession would work.

But Nasr says he does not foresee a major curtailment of MEA's future plans — such as cancellation of the $350m deal to buy 310 airbuses. MEA signed a letter of intent with Airbus Industrie last November to purchase five of the wide-bodied jets with an option for 14 more but has yet to sign the actual contract. 'Psychologically,' the MEA president said, 'it's not good to make a commitment at a time like this, and the down payments would obviously be an added drain on our resources.' But as the first two planes are not scheduled for delivery until 1984, there is an underlying optimism that the deal may go through.

The current troubles, said Nasr, 'can't be worse than what we went through in 1976. We woke up one day with no airplanes' — the MEA planes parked overnight at the airport had been blown up.

The civil war left much of the Lebanese business community with the determination that if it survived that, it could survive ▶

MEA PROFIT DESPITE POLITICAL TENSIONS

London 8 DAYS in English No 23, 13 Jun 81 pp 36-37

[Text]

DESPITE THE difficulties in Lebanon the country's flag airline, Middle East Airlines, made a profit of LE9m ($2.2m) last year. Asad Nasr, the airline's chairman, while pointing out that this was less than in 1979, said it was nevertheless 'satisfactory when viewed against the prevailing unfavourable global and regional conditions as well as the persistently unsettled situation in the Lebanon'.

The year was difficult as a whole worldwide, with major fuel cost increases, high rates of inflation, economic recession and the instability of currencies. The major re-equipment programme begun in 1978 was completed in 1980, when a decision was taken to buy five A130 wide-bodied Airbuses with an option on another 14.

MEA is now studying the possibilities for expanding its network, especially by the introduction of long-haul routes, perhaps jointly with other airlines. Studies had shown that 'expansion of the network is of major importance to the future of MEA, especially in view of the relative stagnation of current markets and routes'.

Besides the losses made during the closure, the company is facing difficulties in leasing, either on a short or long term basis, the two Boeing 747s formerly leased to Saudia. The reason, according to a spokesman, is the surplus of the aircraft on world markets.

During the recent three-week closure of Beirut airport, some staff relinquished 50 per cent of their salary. MEA staff did the same during a six month closure in 1976. During the recent closure, daily losses of the company were LE1.3m, according to Asad Nasr.

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia is soon expected to sign a $1bn extension to the air defence agreement it has with British Aerospace (BAe), and which has UK government backing.

The order, which will cover maintenance, training and related services for the 31 British Lightning interceptors and 40 Strikemaster trainers still in service with the Saudi air force, is likely to be worth around $350m a year from next year until 1985.

The present contract, a five-year extension signed in 1977, expires in August 1982. But BAe officials are 'all but certain' the deal can be ratified between the British and Saudi governments before the end of July — effectively the last moment the company can recruit for its current programme.

The Lightning programme, which has already been worth more than $2bn in nominal terms, began with a $200m order for a private consortium involving British Aircraft Corporation in 1960. Because of problems with the contractor servicing the aircraft, the first extension signed in 1973 and worth $600m, was placed on a government-to-government basis with BAC as prime contractor.

The second extension, signed in 1977 and worth at least $1bn, was at the time the UK's largest single export order.

One of the chief reasons in favour of its extension is that if the Lightnings were phased out next year, Saudi Arabia would

be dependent for its frontline strength on US supplied aircraft, the Northrop F-5E and the McDonnell Douglas F15 Eagle. Saudi defence planners have always insisted that they could not rely solely on the US in the event of war with Israel. Washington has forbidden the stationing of US-made fighters at the kingdom's forward base facing Israel at Tabuk.

A series of fatigue tests, carried out over the past nine months at BAe's military aircraft division, has lengthened the projected life of the Lightning at least up to 1990. It seems more probable that the Lightnings will be combined into one squadron stationed at Tabuk.

Unless BAe can win another order, both the company and the UK face a sharp reduction in their presence and influence in Saudi Arabia after 1985. A major effort is underway to interest the Saudis in the Hawk advanced jet trainer.

CSO: 4300/43

BRIEFS

SOVIET-SYRIAN TRADE BOOST--The Soviet Union and Syria, which recently signed a treaty of friendship, have agreed to boost their bilateral trade by 150 per cent in 1981-1985, in an apparent move to build up the non-military side of their economic relationship. The Soviet news agency Tass reported that trade between the two countries in the present five-year plan period would reach 2bn roubles ($2.6bn), compared with 850m roubles in 1976-1980. The Soviet Union is a major supplier of arms to Syria. In 1979, the Syrians are believed to have received 100 T72 tanks from the Soviet Union and about 2,500 Soviet military and civilian advisers are stationed in Syria. The non-military side of the relationship has been underdeveloped by comparison. Mohammed Atrash, the Syrian trade minister, said in Moscow that Syria hoped bilateral trade in 1981-1985 would exceed the 2bn roubles provided for in the agreement. The Soviet Union is to supply Syria with machinery and equipment, rolled metal, chemicals, and timber in 1981-1985, while Syria is to export consumer goods. [Text] [London 8 DAYS in English No 23, 13 Jun 81 p 56]

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